AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1.   (Previously Presented) A method of automating a decision-making process related to an organization based on a collection of data reflecting a state of the organization, the method comprising:

selecting discrete coupleable items executable in a computer-implemented workflow environment, wherein the discrete coupleable items encapsulate work associated with activities identified by decomposing the decision-making process; said discrete coupleable items comprising:

a set of executable query directives, each executable query directive defining a query to be run against the collection of data;

a set of executable analysis directives, each executable analysis directive defining an analysis to be performed based on results of a query; and

a set of executable distribution directives; each executable distribution directive defining distribution of information based on an analysis to one or more destinations;

creating an executable workflow by coupling at least one of said executable query directives, at least one of said executable analysis directives, and at least one of said executable distribution directives; and

executing said executable workflow to run said query against said collection of data, perform said analysis based on the results of said query, and distribute the results of said analysis to said one or more destinations.

2.   (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

scheduling the executable workflow for automatic execution.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein scheduling comprises:

specifying a condition as a state change in data of the data collection serving as input to the decision-making process; and

responsive to determining the condition has occurred, automatically executing the workflow.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

scheduling the executable workflow for automatic initiation upon detection of a specified state change in the collection of data

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the executable workflow comprises at least one template having unbound values.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the executable workflow comprises at least one conditional branch.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the executable workflow comprises at least one gate.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the executable workflow is sharable among a plurality of users.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the collection of data comprises a data warehouse.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein the data warehouse comprises databases having disparate schema.

11.   (Canceled)

12.   (Original) The method of claim 11 further comprising:

tracking workflow execution duration time.

13.   (Original) The method of claim 11 further comprising:

during execution of the executable workflow, responsive to detecting a

plurality of inputs to an item within the workflow, instantiating multiple instances

of the item for accepting the inputs.

14.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the executable workflow

is operable to specify a proposed course of action to avoid a potential problem.

15.   (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the executable

workflow is operable to specify a proposed course of action to avoid a budget

overrun.

16.   (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the executable workflow

is operable to identify a problem and provide a recommendation for avoiding the

problem.

17.   (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

specifying a condition to trigger automatic initiation of execution of the

executable workflow in the computer environment.

18.　(Original)　The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the destinations represents a decision-maker.

19.　(Original)　The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the destinations is associated with a wireless device.

20.　(Original)　The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the destinations is an email address.

21.　(Original)　The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the destinations is associated with web page.

22.　(Original)　The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the destinations is associated with database.

23.　(Original)　The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the items defines a presentation event to a decision-maker.

24.　(Original)　The method of claim 23 further comprising:
tracking a decision-maker's reaction to the presentation event.

25.　(Original)　The method of claim 1 wherein the executable workflow comprises a metasequence.

26.　(Original)　The method of claim 1 further comprising:
persisting the interim state of the workflow;
providing access to the interim state of the workflow to a decision-maker.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26 wherein providing access comprises providing a hyperlink to the interim state of the workflow.

28. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the executable workflow distributes a link to interim processing performed during execution of the workflow.

29. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the executable workflow performs closed-loop processing without further user input.

30. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the executable workflow reflects best practices of the organization.

31. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the executable workflow reflects best practices of the organization as determined by repeated execution and refinement of the workflow.

32. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the executable workflow distributes information based on stored user permissions.

33. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the executable workflow selectively distributes exceptions when detected in the collection of data.

34. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
publishing the executable workflow to a plurality of users of the computer environment.

35.   (Canceled)

36.   (Canceled)

37.   (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium comprising computer-executable instructions for generating and distributing information based on a collection of data, the instructions causing a computer to:

create an executable sequence of associated discrete items executable in a computer environment, wherein at least one of the associated discrete items defines a query to be run against the collection of data, and at least one of the associated discrete items defines a distribution directive operable to distribute information based on the query to at least one destination;

schedule the executable sequence for automatic execution in the computer environment, wherein at least one of the associated discrete items is denoted as coupled to another of the associated discrete items; and

execute said executable sequence to run said query against said collection of data, and distribute the information based upon the results of said query to said at least one destination.

38.   (Canceled)

39.   (Canceled)

40.   (Canceled)

41.   (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 39~~ claim 1 wherein the processing directives are processed by processing directive coordinators, at least one of which is operable to provide results in markup language and at least one of which is operable to process results in markup language as input.

42.   (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 39~~ claim 1 further comprising:

during execution of the executable sequence, as a result of processing the first processing directive, generating a result set; and

during execution of the executable sequence, coupling the second processing directive to the first processing directive by providing an identifier identifying the result set.

43.   (Canceled)

44.   (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 39~~ claim 1 further comprising:

scheduling the processing directives for periodic execution to provide notifications of data exceptions in the data collection to at least one of the destinations.

45.   (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 39~~ claim 1 wherein the processing directive operable to distribute information is operable to distribute information to a web site, the method further comprising:

scheduling the processing directives for periodic execution to update the web site.

46.   (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 39~~ claim 1 further comprising:

scheduling the processing directives for periodic execution to automatically order additional inventory responsive to detecting a shortage.

47.   (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 39~~ claim 1 wherein the processing directive operable to distribute information is configurable to distribute information to a variety of destination types.

48.   (Original)   The method of claim 47 wherein the destination types comprise the following destination types:

a wireless device destination type; and

an email destination type.

49.   (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 39~~ claim 1 wherein

at least one of the destinations is associated with a user; and

distribution of at least some of the information directed to the processing directive operable to distribute information is blocked based on stored permissions of the user.

50.   (Original) The method of claim 49 wherein

at least one of the destinations is associated with another user; and

access to the blocked information is permitted for the other user based on stored permissions of the other user.

51.   (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 39~~ claim 1 wherein the sequence produces interim results, the method further comprising:

storing the interim results; and

distributing to at least one of the destinations a link by which the interim results can be accessed.

52.   (Original) The method of claim 51 further comprising:

blocking access to at least a portion of the interim results by a user based on stored permissions for the user.

53.   (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 39~~ claim 1 further comprising:

responsive to the associating, when executing the sequence, coupling output of the first processing directive to input of the second processing directives.

54.   (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 39~~ claim 1 wherein at least one of the processing directives is operable to select one out of at least two possible next processing directives denoted as coupled thereto during execution to selectively direct execution flow.

55.   (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 39~~ claim 1 wherein at least one of the processing directives is operable to filter out information not meeting specified criteria.

56.   (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 39~~ claim 1 wherein at least one of the processing directives is operable to filter out information not appearing in a top n records according to a specified sorting criteria.

57.   (Canceled)

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58.   (Original) The method of claim 57 wherein at least one query processing directive and at least one analysis processing directive generate results in a same format, and the analysis processing directive and at least one distribution processing directive accept results in the same format.

59.   (Original) The method of claim 58 wherein the format is XML.

60.   (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 39~~ claim 1 further comprising:

when executing the sequence, storing a result set accessible to and of a format processable by the second processing directive to couple the output of the first processing directive to the input of the second processing directive.

61.   (Original) The method of claim 60 wherein the result set is of a markup language format.

62.   (Original) The method of claim 60 wherein the result set is of XML format.

63.   (Original) The method of claim 60 wherein the result set is accessible to the second processing directive via an identifier identifying the result set.

64.   (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 39~~ claim 1 wherein at least one of the processing directives is sharable among a plurality of users.

65.   (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 39~~ <u>claim 1</u> wherein at least one of the processing directives is included in another executable sequence.

66.   (Original) The method of claim 65 further comprising:

accepting user edits to the processing directive to modify execution of more than one sequence.

67.   (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 39~~ <u>claim 1</u> further comprising:

publishing the executable sequence to a plurality of users.

68.   (Original) The method of claim 67 further comprising:

accepting user edits to the published executable sequence; and

saving the edited published executable sequence as a separate executable sequence.

69.   (Canceled)

70.   (Canceled)

71.   (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented system for defining query-based processing to be performed for a collection of data via specification of a sequence of loosely-coupled processing directives, the system comprising:

a sequence definer for accepting a set of loosely-coupled processing directives, wherein at least one of the processing directives is a query, at least one

of said processing directives is an analysis directive, and wherein at least one of
the processing directives is a distribution directive;

a sequence execution coordinator for coordinating execution of the
sequence and coupling the processing directives during execution of the sequence;
and

a delivery coordinator for distributing results produced by the execution of
the sequence to said one or more destinations.

72.   (Canceled)

73.   (Canceled)

74.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the decision-
making process comprises a financial-based decision-making process for the
organization;

wherein the executable workflow is operable to identify budget overruns
for cost centers;

wherein the collection of data comprises a data warehouse;

wherein the at least one discrete coupleable item defining a query is
operable to generate information relating to the cost centers;

wherein the at least one discrete coupleable item defining an analysis is
operable to generate information to identify significant budget overruns;

wherein the at least one discrete coupleable item defining distribution is
operable to distribute information indicating the identified budget overrun to a
manager responsible for the cost center;

and wherein the method further comprises:

scheduling the executable workflow for periodic execution; and

executing the executable workflow to generate automatic notifications to the manager responsive to detecting a budget overrun.

75.   (Canceled)